

Gender Equality Index 2020: Digitalisation and the future of work

Foreword

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic was a wake-up call for gender equality in Europe. It reminded us about everyday gender inequalities in our society that often go unnoticed – from the shortage of men working in the care sector to the reality of violence facing women in abusive relationships. While it will still take time to fully understand the consequences of COVID-19 for gender equality, it's clear that it poses a serious threat to the fragile achievements made over the past decade.

The European Institute for Gender Equality's Gender Equality Index, as the EU's monitoring tool for gender equality, will play a crucial role in assessing these impacts and bringing evidence to policymakers in the years to come. Previous reports on the Index show us how Member States' policies following the global financial crisis affected gender equality, often to the disadvantage of women. We can learn from the past to ensure that recovery measures post COVID-19 leave no one behind.

The EU's progress on gender equality is still slow, with the Index score improving on average by 1 point every 2 years. At this rate, it will take over 60 years to reach gender equality. The biggest improvement has been in decision-making, which has been driving most of the change in the Gender Equality Index. Since 2010, the domain of power has contributed 65 % of the overall gain in gender equality in the EU. This shows us that change is possible, when legislative measures and other proactive government actions are implemented.

This year, the Index report focuses on the effects of digitalisation on the world of work and the consequences for gender equality. This topic is extremely relevant in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ways in which the working lives of women and men have been affected by it. New types of jobs and innovative ways of working through online platforms were analysed to gain an understanding of who is doing these jobs and whether they help or hinder gender equality.

With a detailed analysis for the EU and each Member State, the Index shows country-level achievements and areas for improvement. More than ever, policymakers need the data that the Index provides. We hope that our findings will help Europe's leaders to design future solutions that are inclusive and promote gender equality in our post-COVID-19 society.

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